4.00 P.M

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Accident at Unmanned Level Crossing involving 7304 Sahyadri Express and Bus on the Miraj-Pune BG Single Line Section of South Central Railway on 11th December, 1993

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA) : Sir,

It is with deep anguish that I apprise the House of an unfortunate accident involving No. 7304 Kolhapur-Bombay VT Sahyadri Express and a school bus at about 11.30 Hrs on 11-12-93 on the Miraj-Pune BG SL section on the Hubli Division of South Central Railway. While the train was on run in the block section between Alandi and Phursungi stations and approaching level crossing No. 11 at Km. 17/11-10, two buses carrying Primary School children for a picnic suddenly tried to cross the level crossing. It is learnt that driver of the train whistled heavily and tried to slow down. One bus passed the level crossing, but the second bus was hit. It appears that the driver of the illfated bus while taking the turn to cross the level crossing, perhaps, stalled because he could not change the pear in time as there is a gradient. As a result 7304 Sahyadri Express hit the tail end of the bus and threw the bus down the embankment of the level crossing into the field, about 40—50 metres away.

Due to the impact, 38 passengers of the bus including 34 school children, 2 lady teachers, a peon and a clerk lost their live; and another 45 sustained ironies. There was no injary to the train crew or train passenger.

The level crossing where the accident occurred is on a straight track, served by a kutcha road and the visibility on either side is clear for nearly 500 metres, with the road running parallel to the track for about 450 metres. It is said that the level crossing is not very much in use except on holidays by people visiting the rearby temple.

Immediately oh receipt of the informa tion about the accident, 'Medical Van from Ghorpuri/Pune "With' railway Doctors left for the site of the accident General -Manager, Central Railway alongwith' senior offi cers, Director, Indian Railway'Institute of Civil Engineering" and Area Manager, Pune, organised immediate relief arrange ments in coordination with. District Administration and Municipal Corporation.of pune. Divisinal Railway Manager, Hubli , along with Divisional Officers also reshed to the site. The Additional General Manager South Central Railway, alongwith Senior officers also proceeded to the site Of Government Hospital; Pune, where they are progressing;

The Minister of Railways Shri Jaffer Sharief, accompanied) 'by- Chairman; Railway Board, Member Traffic and Member Engineering rushed to the site by a special airforce plane arid also visited the riajiwed in the hospital and consoled the relatives; The Railway Minister ordered an enquiry into the accident.

In an unfortunate accident like this generally ex-gratia or compensation is not allow ed. Since the injured are small children as a special case. The RailwayMinister,has ordered ex-gratia payment to the injured. My senior colleague Shri Jaffer Sharief, all railway workers and I express pur heart-felt condolences to the families who lost the valuable lives of their children and, sincere sympathies to the injured,

T trust the House will join me extend ing our heartfelt condolences the bereav ed families.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) IN THE CHAIR]

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (Maharash-tra : Sir, this dastardly accident took place in Pune the day before yesterday and the Railway Minister was fast in coming to Poona and visitirg the accident spot. Un-fortunatcly, he is not in the House here today. Since he had been to .the spot, I think it was in the fitness of things. if he had been here to answer all the clarifications, because Mr. Lenka was not there. This is a matter of utmost importance and

the whole country is looking to this incident, and a lot of steps might have to be taken. Therefore, it is better if you call the Railway Minister to give clarifications. In case you can summon Mr. Jaffer Sharief to the House, I think it might be appropriate, unless he is tied up somewhere.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : The hon. Minister of State for Railways is here and he is quite competent to give you replies.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Sir, this is an accident where two buses of school-going children were passing through a level crossing. In the statement it is said that the road is running paralled to the track for about 450 metres. It is true, this road is running parallel to the track but there is a steep turn on to the railway track. The first bus went all right, and the second bus followed the first bus blindly. The driver was on the right side where the steering wheel is. So it is quite possible that he did not see the train.

I went there along with the Railway Minister. It is quite dangerous because the road runs parallel to the railway track and there is a sudden, sharp turn and again there is 'U' turn. All such unmanned level crossings have to be avoided. This accident has happened. We can't bring those lives back but I think there is a lesson in this. In further, if there is an unmanned level crossing, it should be a straight run. You can't have a road parallel to the railway track and a sudden turn to the left. I think all over the country, where there are unmanned level crossings, this needs to be checked. I think it is very, very dangerous. It could definitely happen that the driver might not have seen the train because it is not at all clear, and if you go in full speed, anything could happen. Also, the signboard which is there at the crossing, I must say, is so small that it is not possible for a bus driver who is going at a relatively high speed to notice the signboard. There should be three, four cautionary signboards much before the railway track. There was a small signboard and that also was in English. How does a Marathi-speaking bus "river know what is written in English on the signboard ? I think this also has to be reviewed, that wherever signboards are put up, they should be in the local language. I am sure, if you have enough warnings, it would be useful. Here, though the Minister says that it is not used very much, I am sorry, there have been a few protests from the village Loni, that it should be a manned level crossing. There have been demands earlier. They were not heeded to. I agree that on weekdays there is not much rush, but on weekends, because that is nearer to the picnic spots, there is a lot of traffic. So it does justify a manned gate there. The Railway Minister should look into this matter.

I am also happy that he said that thoug'n they do not usually give ex-gratia payments, in this cause they made payment to the injured. I don't know how much they have paid. When I asked the railway officials, they said the payment was just for the treatment of the people at the hospital. But what about the people who have left the hospital and would take treatment for the next two, there months ? There are quite a few serious cases. Are you saying that you are giving ex-gratia payment to the limit of whatever treatment is required and that sort of ex-gratia payment will be made ? Or is it just for the time being ?

DR. BAPU KALDATE (Maharashtra) : Rs. 500 to Rs. 2,000.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : I do not want anything more than the treatment. I am happy that as a special case you have given this ex-gratia payment, but what about the 38 dead children ? Would you make a special case for them also ?

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra) : They must do it.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : They must do that also as a special case because I think this is the demand of all the people of Pune, and all over the country people are now looking forward to see what sort of relief they are going to give to the affected people. Also, Sir, I would like to say that in this connection in your statement you have mentioned it to be a section of the Hubli Division of the South-Central

Railway. 1 think there is need for reorganisation of the Divisions. When the accident occurred, people from Pune which is 17 km. away from the accident site, responded in a fast manner. A lot of people waited for the AGM from Hubli to come to the accident site. This is the organisation of the British time. There must be reorganisation of the Divisions. An areas which is 17 km. from Pune, definitely cannot be administratively run from Hubli. To avoid inefficiency etc. in future, 1 think, there is need for changing the Headquarters.

Once again, of course, at this moment 1 take the opportunity to congratulate the doctors of the Sasoon Hospital in Pune, who did a very fast and good job. The police also helped. Thousands of people had surrounded the place. It was a holiday. That day a lot of children had gone for picnic. The patents did not know which bus had actually met with the accident. So, thousands of people were around there. I think the hon. Home Minister also visited the place. The next morning the Chief Minister also visited the patients in the Hospital. I think the Pune police did a good job. O course, all that cannot bring the children back to life.

Once again I make a plea that there should be adequate compensation for the injured and for the dead.

Thank you.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherrry) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, though the statement is exhaustive, it raises several questions about the afety measures to be followed by the Railways not only at the point of level-crossings but also others which the ron. Members on several occasions raised in this House.

Sir, the Kolhapur-Bombay railway-line has got heavy traffic. Pune being a junction, there is heavy movement of trains. Therefore, pertinently one question arises in everybody's mind here about how you distinguish and decide about manned and unmanned level crossings and what criteria you follow. This level crossing is just about 20 km. away from Pune. A number of trains pass through the line. I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the criteria for deciding about the manned level crossing and the unmanned level crossing. How do the Railways decide about them ?

It was a gruesome accident. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra, who was asked about the accident, when he visited the site, said, "Without the enquiry report, we will not be able to make any comment" But the Railway Minister who visited the spot, it has appeared in some of the papers, while ordering the enquiry into the accident, made an observation that the driver of the ill-fated bus was at fault. Sir, this is the second occasion when the Railways, while ordering an enquiry, have come to a conclusion beforoe getting an enquiry report. Tnis is a very sorry state of affairs. Then, why do you order an enquiry ? When you are sure that the bus driver was at fault, why do you order an enquiry into the matter ? While the Chief Minister says that after the enquiry he would be able to make some comment on that, what prompted the Railway Minister to say that? I do not know whether such a version was given by the hon. Railway Minister to the press people who interviewed him. I would like to know that.

Thirdly, most of the accidents in India occur at unmanned level crossings only. Several accidents have taken place like that. This is a gruesome accident.

Not only that, but the Railways have to review their safety system they have been following so far because they have been following the norms laid down ten, fifteen years back. Now several trains have been introduced. The population growth is there. Not only that; several goods trains are moving without any schedule. The hon. Member from that area was mentioning

that it was a sharp turn. The bus driver could not ascertain the movement of the train in the sharp turn. There are so many aspects in that.

I would like to make a small request. When the Minister deviates from the general guidelines in giving compensation to the injured persons there is no bar on giving compensation to the family members of the deceased children. After all, these children were also the future if this country and they died in this gruesome accident. I do not find any mercy from the Railway Ministry for such an accident. The Minister in his statement said that it was an unfortunate accident. I want the hon. Railway Minister to' fix some responsibility in the Railway administration. I want him to be very categorical in that. Some responsibility should be fixed for not following the norms and guidelines and not reviewing the safety norms[1] and in allowing unmanned level crossings to cotinue in spite of heavy traffic in that line. Simply the Railway Minister giving a statement in this House, the Members seeking clarifications on the statement and the Minister's assurances that such measures and safety norms would be taken without follow-up action, is not going to help anybody. I want the hon.. Railway Minister to fix the responsibility.

We have seen recently the Malwa Express involved in an accident. Within a span of three months, 8 to 9 accidents took place. There is some fault in the railway system, railway traffic system aad the railway's maintenance system. I want the hon. Minister to consider these things and see that these defects are rectified.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Honourable Members, there are twenty-one speakers who want to seek clarifications from the hon. Minister. May I request you to be a little brief so that we can cover it" today ? I request Mr. Fernandes to take the floor.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES (Goa) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, thank you. This accident was very tragic and unfortunate because it involved the lives of innocent people who could not defend themselves.

As already mentioned by colleagues in this House, the Minister had mentioned in his statement that he had constituted an enquiry committee to go into the cause of the accident. It was not proper for the Minister or any Government official to make a statement in the press before this enquiry is over. He should not prejudge the issue and say that so and so was responsible and so and so was not responsible. The hon. Railway Minister has to protect the Railway Department. May I know from the Minister whether this line is an accident prone area ? Was it the first accident that occurred at this level crossing ?

Secondly, we were told that there are 38,000 railway crossings in this country and out of this only 15,000 crossings are unmanned. We have advanced so much in science and technology, can't the Railways provide some facility to man all the railway crossings ? May 1 know from the hon. Minister whether they will use the advanced technology so that people are cautioned at such railway crossings by way of sirens ? We have a lot of remote control units in this country. I think investment will not be much.

Thirdly, it has been mentioned in the statement that visibility was all right up to 500 meters. The statement also says that the driver tried to slow down the train, but there was no attempt on the part of the driver to stop the train. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the driver of the train was medically checked and whether he was intoxicated and whether the brakes of the train were in working condition ? It has been stated that he tried to slow down but there was no attempt to stop the train. It was imminent that the train would hit the bus.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, my other colleagues have mentioned about ex-gratia payment. I feel it is very pertinent that the Government should make an enquiry and see that

a member of the deceased family is given employment in the Railways. These are my points. I hope the hon: Minister will res pond to my queries.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, यह बहुत ही दर्दनाक और दुखद रेल दुर्घटना हुई है जिसमें 34 बच्चों के साथ दो अध्यापकों, एक चपरासी और एक क्लर्क की भी मृत्यु हो गयी। महोदय, जैसा कि मंत्रीजी ने अपने वक्तव्य में बतलाया है कि जो चौकीदार रहित रेल का फाटक था, उसके केवल पांच सौ मीटर तक की दूरी तक दिखाई पड़ता था। तो रेल मंत्रालय को पुनः विचार करना चाहिए कि यह जो चौकीदार रहित रेलवे फाटक हैं, इनमें इस प्रकार की व्यवस्था क्यों न की जाए। हालांकि इसमें बहुत अधिक धन खर्च होगा फिर भी यह बिल्कुल सही है कि यदि वहां पर फाटक होता तो यह दर्दनाक घटना से बचा जा सकता था क्योंकि जो मनुष्य की कीमत है, वह धन से ज्यादा होती है। महोदय अभी माननीय सदस्य श्री फर्नांडीज कह रहे थे कि शायद इस देश में 16 हजार ऐसे रेलवे क्रॉसिंग हैं जहां पर कि चौकीदार या रेल कर्मचारी नहीं हैं, इसलिए इस बारे में रेल मंत्रालय को गंभीरता से विचार करना चाहिए।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरी समझ से दिसम्बर 1993 के महीने में शायद ये छठी रेल दुर्घटना हुई है। दो तो मध्यप्रदेश में ही हुई हैं और शेष और कहीं हुई हैं, लेकिन जहां तक मुझे स्मरण है दिसम्बर, 1993 में यह छठी रेल दुर्घटना है, जिसमें से चार रेल दुर्घटनाओं में लोगों की जानें भी गई हैं। इसलिए रेल मंत्रालय को इस सिलसिले में विचार करना चाहिए कि आखिर क्या वजह है कि इस प्रकार की दुर्घटनाएं हो रही हैं ? उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मेरे पूर्व सदस्यों ने जो विचार व्यक्त किए हैं, मैं उनसे पूर्ण रूप से सहमत हूं। मैंने भी कल के समाचार पत्र में पढ़ा कि रेल मंत्रीजी ने विचार व्यक्त किया है कि जो ड्राइवर बस चला रहा था, उसी की इस दुर्घटना में गलती थी। मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि जब आपको जानकारी है कि जब इस प्रकार की दुर्घटना में लोगों की जानें जाएंगी तो निश्चित रूप से रेल के कानून के हिसाब से उसकी जांच बिठानी चाहिए। इसलिए जांच बिठाने के पहले इस प्रकार से विचार प्रकट करना मेरी समझ में किसी भी प्रकार से उचित नहीं था और भविष्य में इस बात का ख्याल रखा जाना चाहिए। इस संबंध में मैं ज्यादा विचार व्यक्त न करते हुए यह जरूर चाहूंगा कि जो रेल फाटक बिना कर्मचारी है, उन पर कर्मचारियों की नियुक्ति करने के लिए आप प्रयास कीजिए भले ही उसमें चाहे कितनी धनराशि खर्च हो, मेरी समझ से उसे खर्च करना चाहिए।

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, it is very unfortunate that 34 school children have died in the rail accident. As per the statement of the hon. Minister, the bus was carrying 83 passengers, including the injured. How is it that for a school picnic, an average luxury bus was allowed to carry the children, instead of a State-authorised RTC bus ?

The second aspect I would like to know from the hon. Minister is this. It is reported in a section of the press that two babul trees were hurriedly chopped off, soon after the accident, by the railway authorities. Is it a fact ? If it is so, why did the chopping-og take place at that time ? How was it connected with the accident ? Were the trees directly or indirectly responsible for the accident ? If it is so, why did the railway authorities leave the babul trees there when there was a possibility of their causing an accident, for quite a long time, till the accident took place ?

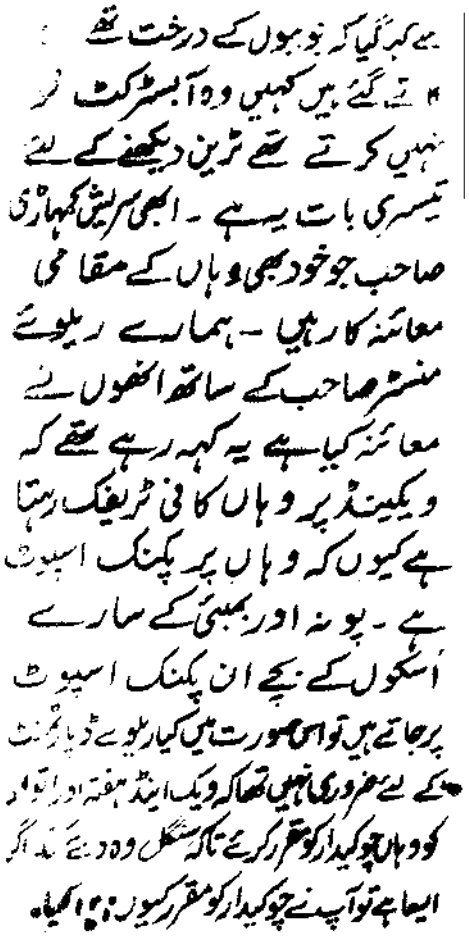
The hon. Minister was also mentioning about the Hubli Division being delinked from the South-Central Railway and reorganised with the Central Railway. The statement says that the Additional General Manager, S.C.R., had also rushed to the spot. What happened to the General Manager ? Is he on leave ? Or is he otherwise engaged ? Why could he not make it a point to visit the spot ? In this connection,

1 would like to add that whenever an accident occure, the Divisional Railway Manager concerned should be held responsible for the accident. He should be answerable for the safe functioning and the safe running of the railway trains. I would like to add that while reorganising the Railways, the Hooghly division may be delinked from the South Central Railway and in its place, the Waltair division may be linked with the South Central Railway.

श्री मोहम्मद खलीलुर रहमान (आंध्र प्रदेश) : जनाब वाइस चेयरमैन साहब, यह जो वाक्या हुआ है, इन्तिहाई बदनसीब वाक्या है और मैं समझता हूं कि मौजूदा हाल का इन्तिहाई एक दर्दनाक वाक्या है। अभी हमारे मिनिस्टर साहब ने जो स्टेटमेंट यहां पेश किया और जो अखबारात की न्यूज है, वह उससे शकूक-व-शुबहात जेहन में आते हैं। मैं समझता हूं कि रेलवे मिनिस्टर साहब इसका इजाला करेंगे।

पहला मेरा सवाल है, अब तक जो हमारे मुल्क में जो रेलवे क्रोसिंग हैं, जहां पर कोई चौकीदार वगैरह नहीं रहते, कितने हादसे अब तक हुए हैं ? यह मेरा पहला सवाल है। दूसरा सवाल यह है, मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि ट्रेन और बस दोनों एक ही सिम्त में दौड़ रहे थे या कि ट्रेन एक सिम्त पर जा रही थी और बस दूसरे सिम्त पर जा रही थी ? क्या बस का ड्राइवर ट्रेन देख सकता था या जैसा कि अभी मेरे कुलीग की जानिब से कहा गया कि जो बबूल के दरखत थे वह काटे गए हैं, कहीं वह ओबस्ट्रक्ट तो नहीं करते थे ट्रेन देखने के लिए ? तीसरी बात यह है, अभी सुरेश कलमाडी साहब, जो खुद भी वहां के मुकामी-माइनाकार है, हमारे रेलवे मिनिस्टर साहब के साथ इन्होंने मुदायना किया है, यह कह रहे थे कि वीकएण्ड पर वहां काफी ट्रैफिक रहता है क्योंकि वहां पर पिकनिक स्पोट हैं, पूना और बंबई के सारे स्कूल के बच्चे इन पिकनिक स्पोट पर जाते हैं। तो इस सूरत में क्या रेलवे डिपार्टमेंट के लिए जरूरी नहीं था कि वीकएण्ड हफ्ता और इतवार को वहां चौकीदार को मुकर्रर करते ताकि सिग्नल वह दे सकता ? अगर ऐसा है, तो आपने चौकीदार को मुकर्रर क्यों नहीं किया ?

شری محمد خلیل الرحمان "آندھرا پردیش"
جناب وائس چیئرمین صاحب - یہ جو واقعہ
ہوا ہے انتہائی بدنصیب واقعہ ہے اور میں
سمجھتا ہوں کہ موجودہ حال کا انتہائی اک
دردناک واقعہ ہے - ابھی ہمارے منسٹر
صاحب جو اسٹیٹمنٹ یہاں پیش کیا ہے اور
جو اخبارات کی نیوز ہیں اس سے شکوک
وشبہات ذہن میں آتے ہیں - میں سمجھتا ہوں
کہ ریلوے منسٹر صاحب اس کا ازالہ کریں گے -
پہلا میرا سوال ہے - اب تک جو ہمارے
ملک میں جو ریلوے کراسنگ ہیں - جہاں
پر کوئی چوکیدار نہیں رہتے کتنے حادثے
اب تک ہوئے ہیں - یہ میرا پہلا سوال
ہے - دوسرا سوال یہ ہے - میں جاننا
چاہتا ہوں کہ ٹرین اور بس دونوں ایک
ہی سمت میں دوڑ رہے تھے یا کہ ٹرین ایک
سمت پر جا رہی تھی اور بس دوسری سمت پر
جا رہی تھی - کیا بس کا ڈرائیور ٹرین دیکھ سکتا
تھا یا جیسا - ابھی میرے کولیگ کی جانب



†[ ] Transliteration in Arabic Script.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal) . Sir, I do not know what I should say. It is a gruesome tragedy where many school children have been killed. How did it happen ? That is different thing. But the fact remains that the main culprit it the Railways because they have a number of unmanned level crossings and it is one of the level crossings where the accident took place.

During the debate on the Railway Budget, a number of times we had recorded our views tha unmanned railway level crossings are all death-traps and they should be manned. For that purpose, if money has to be spent, it should be spent because human life has to be saved. This type of accidents took place previously also. But this time, children have been killed. What can be more gruesome than this accident ? I would like to know from tha hon- Minister whether the department will come to their senses after this gruesome accident and will take steps to man all the unmanned railway level crossings so that this type of accidents do not occure.

Secondly, how many unmanned railway level crossings are there where there is no manning system or gate system ?

The third question is about the compensation. In the case of railway aaccidents, we give relief. Here also, mostly the Railways are responsible because the driver may be wrong. He may not be putting gear or he may not be seeing the bus coming. But since it was an open railway level crossing, the accident took place. Why don't they come forward to give compensation to the bereaved families or to the families of those who got injured ? In this particular case, since school children have been killed, the rules should not come as a barrier to provide relief to the people. The citizens, the local people should be made to understand that the Railways should give proper compensation to those families whose members have suffered permanent disability or who have become handicapped. They should also give adequate compensation to those families whose children have been killed in this accident. I would like to know whether the Railways are also considering that part also. Again, 1 request the Railway Minister to see to it that all railway crossings are manned and not a moment is lost in making a project like that.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE (Maharashtra) : Sir, the tragedy defies all description. Till today, 38 school children, all between the age of 7 and 8, studying in second stanadard, have lost their lives. There are, in addition, teachers and other members of the staff. Children who would have returned home and told their parents the joyous story of how they enjoyed the picnic, are no more. We cannot bring them back, but we can

certainly use this occasion to see how such a gruesome tragedy ntver occurs again. And I find, to my dismay, that the attitude of the Railways is not only casual but it also shows the least concern for the safety of human beings. I am quite convinced, though for the sake of argument one may not go into whether it was negligence on the part of the bus driver or the railway driver, that this is not an accident, but a man made tragedy. If only the railway crossing had been manned, I have no doubt that the tragedy could have been avoided. According to the statement of the Railway Minister which I read this morning, there are 38,000 railway crossings, out of which 15,775 are unmanned. Again, according to the Railway Minister, the railway crossing is manned only if the traffic exceeds 6,000 units. Now this norm is not only arbitrary but totally unmindful of cosiderations of safety for human lives also. The whole approch, as I said, is very casual and Careless. It is unfortunate that safety considerations for human lives are thrown to the winds by the Railway authorities, and, therefore, I do not agree with this statement. In the last but two paragraphs it says, "In an unfortunate accident like this generally ex-gratia or compensation is not allowed. Since the injured are small children, as a special case, I have ordered ex-gratia payment to the injured." I take strong exception to this. The Railways cannot get over their liability by making a statement like this. I have no doubt in my mind in this case that the Railways would be held liable for not manning the railway crossing. However, whatever some of the Members have said, I want to use this occasion to make a firm demand and ask for a commitment from the Railway Minister that he would in a fixed, specified time, ensure that no railway crossing in India will remain unmanned, think, nothing short of that assurance today will, in a way, pacify the anger of the people of that region, not only of that region but of the whole country, because it is a great shock to the entire country.

The second point is, the norms of compensation are well laid down. Even in a case where a bomb explodes in a railway compartment, the compensation paid is one lakh of rupees for loss of a human life and fifty thousand rupees for an injured person. The way the figure has been concealed—I hope, am not wrong, the figure is too meagre, to be even mentioned in the statement. This particular issue was handled by Jaffer Shariefji himself. But I would like"Shri Lenkaji—he is an able Minister—to explain as to what amount they are going to give. In any way, there is no reason why they should not accept the general law which applicable to the victims, whether he is an earthquake victim or whether he is a bomb victims or whether he is a vic-tim of communal clashes, and pay Ms, 1,00,000 every human life which is lost and. Rs 50,000 to those who are injured. These are the three questions Which I want the hon. Minister to clarify.

श्रीमती सेत्या बहिन (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उप-सभाध्यक्ष जी, यह जो रेल दुर्घटना हुई है तथा जिसके संबंध में माननीय रेल [illegible] जी ने आज जो बयान दिया है, वह बड़ी हृदय विदारक घटना है, क्योंकि इस दुर्घटना में 34 नन्हे-मुन्हे स्कूली बच्चों की मृत्यु हुई है तथा कुछ अध्यापिकाएं एवं अन्य व्यक्ति भी हैं। मान्यवर, इस घटना के प्रति हम सभी लोग संवेदना प्रगट करते हैं तथा हमारी सबकी हार्दिक संवेदना है।

मान्यवर, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि उन्होंने अपने बयान में दिया है कि जिस क्रॉसिंग पर यह दुर्घटना हुई, इसके दोनों ओर लगभग 500 मीटर की दूरी तक स्पष्ट दिखाई दे रहा था। लेकिन अखबारों की सूचना है और एक अखबार की नहीं, कई अखबारों ने यह लिखा है कि वहां सड़क पर जो बसें आदि जा रही थीं उनको उस क्रॉसिंग पर आ रही सह्याद्री एक्सप्रेस गाड़ी नहीं दिखाई दे रही थी, क्योंकि वहां पर बहुत झाड़िया थी। माननीय मंत्री जी ने इसमें यह भी दिया है कि जो क्रॉसिंग था उसका कभी-कभी ही इस्तेमाल होता था और वह कच्ची सड़क थी तथा रेल लाइन के समानान्तर थी। महोदया, ऐसा अक्सर होता है कि जहां रेलवे क्रॉसिंग होता है वहां स्पीड ब्रेकर भी

दनाए जाते हैं। तो मैं यह जानना चाहूंगी कि वहां स्पीड ब्रेकर थे या नहीं थे ? दूसरी बात, यह एक अकेली दुर्घटना नहीं है। ऐसी दुर्घटनाएं पहले भी कई बार हो चुकी हैं, जिसमें रेल क्रासिंग पर किसी न किसी वाहन से टकरा जाती हैं, जिससे बड़ी जनहानि होती है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहती हूं कि क्या इस तरह का कभी रेल विभाग ने यह सर्वे कराया है कि ऐसे कितने क्रासिंग हैं जहां पर फाटक बंद करने वाले चौकीदार तैनात नहीं हैं तथा वहां पर कोई सिगनल नहीं है ? इसके साथ ही क्या इन दुर्घटनाओं से रेल विभाग कोई सबक लेकर चेतावनी देने वाले सिगनल्स और स्पीड ब्रेकर ऐसे क्रासिंग पर लगवाएगा, ताकि अगर कोई गाड़ी आदि आती है तो स्वाभाविक रूप से इस कारण उसकी गति धीमी हो सकती है और आगे देखने के लिए उसके पास समय व स्थान रहता है।

माननीय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने लिखा है कि ऐसी दुर्घटनाओं के लिए मुआवजा देने का कोई प्रावधान नहीं है, लेकिन फिर भी चूंकि इस दुर्घटना में छोटे-छोटे बच्चे थे इसलिये उन्होंने घायलों को कुछ मुआवजा देने की पेशकश की है। मैं जानना चाहती हूं कि कितना मुआवजा दिया गया है ? मालूम पड़ा है कि शायद दो हजार या पांच सौ रुपए की राशि दी गई है। मैं समझती हूं कि यह तो न्यायसंगत नहीं है और एक मजाक सा है, क्योंकि यह प्राईवेट स्कूल के बच्चे थे। यह भी मालूम पड़ा है कि जब बस में बच्चे जा रहे थे तो वह कुछ गा रहे थे। स्वाभाविक है कि उसमें उन्हें रेल की सीटी नहीं सुनाई दी होगी। रेलगाड़ी के ड्राइवर को तो क्रासिंग से सामने दिखाई दे जाता है मगर बस के ड्राइवर को झाड़ियों व अन्य बाधाओं के कारण उसको आती हुई रेलगाड़ी नहीं दिखाई दी होगी। तो मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि सर्वे करके देश भर में ऐसे कितने क्रासिंग हैं तथा उन पर क्या चेतावनी देने वाले सिगनल्स लगाए जाएंगे या नहीं ? दूसरे, क्या रेलगाड़ियों के सभी ड्राईवर्स को इस बात के लिए प्रशिक्षित किया जाएगा कि सिगनल्स को देखकर वे अपनी गाड़ी की रफ्तार धीमी करें, जहां क्रासिंग पर कोई चौकीदार की अथवा गेट को बंद करने की व्यवस्था नहीं है ? अतः क्या ऐसे चौकीदारहीन क्रासिंग पर चेतावनी देने वाले सिगनल्स या इस तरह से कोई अन्य व्यवस्था करेंगे जिससे ड्राईवर अपनी गाड़ी की रफ्तार धीमी कर सके ? इसके साथ ही मैं यह जानना चाहूंगी कि जो लोग घायल हो गए, जाहिर है कि इनमें से कुछ विकलांग भी हुए होंगे तो उनके लिए आर्टिफिशियल हाथ-पैर लगाने के लिए क्या रेल विभाग सहायता करेगा ? साथ ही जो अध्यापिकाएं या दूसरे लोग घायल हो गए, उनके लिए कोई रोजगार देने की व्यवस्था की जाएगी जैसे रेलवे के स्कूलों में उन्हें अध्यापक बनाकर नौकरी दी जा सकती है या उनके आश्रितों को नौकरी दी जा सकती है या छोटा-मोटा रोजगार, दुकान वगैरह दी जा सकती है। इसके लिए रेल विभाग साधन उपलब्ध कराएगा या नहीं, यह मैं जानना चाहती हूं।

SHRI VlSHVJIT P. SINGH (Mahara-shtra) : Mr. Vice-Chair-man, I thought, I would not like to lay emphasis on the Railway norms. Unfortunately, I am leased by the very nature of the statement to do so. The statement which has been made by the hon. Minister, I am afraid, has been prepared by a group of officiats in the Railway Ministry, probably by the soure officers who are responsible for looking after the safety of this particular section. Unfortunately, an attempt has been made fit the statement to try and justify matters on behalf of the Railway Ministry. the statement says, "Two bases carrying primary school children for a picnic, suddenly tried to cross the level creasing." Who was there to see whether they suddenly crossed? Who did say it ? Then the statement says, "It is learnt that the driver of the -train whistled heavily and tried to slow down." If the driver saw the bases, why did he not stop? If he whistled heavily, who heard It"? Before the inquiry is in, you are saying that they suddenly tried to cross and the driver whistled heavily, sure you are judging a thing before

the Inquiry Committee is in? Then why did you send it for an inquiry? If you have already prejudged the matter, then don't sent it,for an inquiry.

Para 3 of the statement says:

"The, level crossing where the acci-• dent occurred is on a straight track, served by a kutcha road and the visibi-lity on either side is clear for nearly 500 metres,' with the road running parallel to the track for about 450 metres.".

If it is true, then why did not the train stop ? "Why did not the train stop when the driver of the train saw the bus.

That Statement says, "It is said that this level crossing is not very much in use except on holidays by people visiting the nearby temple."

In other words,,,this road is used only when people go to' the nearby temple. Why was not the train driver aware of it ? Why did he not stop ? You cannot justify it by saying: that this level crossing was used paly; on holidays,

Shri Murlidhar Chandrakant Bhandare has,just now mentioned that there is a norm in the Railways that if this much traffic is there only then there will be a manned level crossing I would like to ask the hon. Railway Minister how he would apply this norm in this case, Suppose, only one train is going to go over a track in one month. Then you calculate the average weight on the track and put very weak track on that section because only one train is going to go from there in one month. But if that one train is very heavy, the track is going to collapse.,Similarly^ I would like to point out that if on those, particular holidays, traffic is heavy,the level crossing needs to be manned.Every system is as weak as the weakest link, is as strong as the strongest link. Your norms have failed. Your norm applies on the date at the holiday and it 5s that norm which would apply to that road, not-what you are applying -every day:

I would like to say two mora things. As Mr. Bhandare and many hon. Members have said, if you are going to give a compensation of Rs. 1000 or Rs. 500, please do not do this drama of giving compensation. If you are going to give a compensation of Rs. 1000 or Rs. 500, I am afraid, it would not do. Please give adequate compensation according to the norms. This is a horrendous accident. I am not going into the merits about who is resposible and who is not responsible. I am not like one of the railway officials who sat and drafted this statement and prejudged the issue. I am not going to prejudge the issue. The only contention is that the railways ought to pay proper compensation as is paid in all cases. Kindly announce here in the House today that you are going to pay Rs. one lakh to each dead and Rs. 50,000 to; each injured. Kindly announce this before you leave the House, Mr. Minister. I would urge upon you. Secondly, talking of level crossings, isn't there some method ? I can understand a fully manned level crossing where some kind of investment is involved. You have to have signals and. you have to have people there all the time. You also have to have an elaborate system where moving trains can be stopped. I can understand that. Would it not be possible in these days of technology,—as was mentioned by an hon. Member who is not here, Shri.Fernandes from Goa—to try and work out another kind of level crossing—two or three categories of level crossings? We could have a level crossing where there could be a man posted who could get a telephone call or some kind of electronic signal so that he can at least close the gates while the trains are passing. Alternatively, we could even have a lower category than that. There could be a bulb flashing in the cabin of a person with a siren blowing so that he knows that this is the time when he, has to put the chain across the two posts. This is done in many cases. Let that be done. If you cannot even do that, can you at least install a siren at both the points of the level crossing so that even if it is not manned while the trains are passing, the siren could blow- with a red light flashing there to tell you not to cross the track ? Could some such arrangement be made? The railways with all its resources, With all its ingenuity,

the railways which have a long tradition, which have one of the finest work-force, the finest engineers in the country, don't tell me that the railways are not capable of coming out with any kind of system). If the railways cannot come to any conclusion, cannot give any system to us, kindy let us know. At least, let the State of Maharashtra know how many level crossings are unmanned in the State of Maharashtra. The Maharashtca Government itself will make arrangements. We as Members of Parliament will prevail upon our Government and will try and see that some arrangement is made at these level crossings. If ii;e Central Government, if the Railway Minstry cannot make this arrangement, our State is very much capable of doing it. We will make the arrangements. We have done this in the past when we wanted certain bridges to be constructed and certain tracks to be laid. The Railway Ministry at that point of time said, 'we do not have the money.' The people of Maharashtra gave the money. Today 1 once again say, 'please guarantee the safety of our people.' If you are hot going to invest the money, let us know, we will invest the money. Thank you.

श्री रामनरेश यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं इस हृदय विदारक दुर्घटना पर जो रेल मंत्री जी का वक्तव्य आया है, जहां मैं मृतक बच्चों और दूसरे लोगों के प्रति अपनी समवेदना व्यक्त करता हूं, वहीं पर मैं बहुत दुख के साथ कहना चाहता हूं कि यह जो वक्तव्य है, मैं पूरी तरह से विश्वजीत पृथ्वीजोत सिंह जी के वक्तव्य से सहमत हूं कि लगता यह है कि मंत्री जी ने बयान दिया और बयान इस आधार पर दिया कि इस के लिए बस के लोग जिम्मेदार है। तो आखिर मंत्री जी का जब वक्तव्य हो गया तो अधिकारियों को अपनी कमजोरियों को छिपाने का रास्ता मिल ही गया। यह बात जब मालूम है कि वहां क्रासिंग है, बगल में मंदिर है, बराबर लोग आते जाते रहते हैं तो ऐसी सूरत में आप यह कहें कि उधर से ट्रेन आ रही थी, सीटी बजाई ट्रेन ने और बस ने क्रासिंग को पार करना चाहा, एक बस निकल गई और दूसरी बस का ड्राइवर निकालना चाहता था, गेयर नहीं बदल सका तो वहां पर ऐक्सीडेंट हो गया। मैं आरोप तो नहीं लगा सकता, लेकिन मैं बहुत दुखी मन से कहना चाहता हूं। मंत्री जी ने एक तरफ जांच की घोषणा कर दी है और यह कहा है कि बस वाले की गलती है इसीलिए ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि अधिकारियों ने भी इस तरह का वक्तव्य दे दिया। जब आपने जांच की घोषणा कर दी तो इस तरह की बात नहीं आनी चाहिए थी। यह बात ठीक है कि जांच चल रही है तो यह उनकी जिम्मेदारी है कि वह निष्कर्ष निकालें। वह मौके पर जा कर देखें कि कैसे दुर्घटना हुई, किन परिस्थितियों में हुई और कौन जिम्मेदार है। इससे पहले ही इस तरह की बात कह देना कि लारी वाले की जिम्मेदारी है यह ठीक नहीं है। ऐसा वक्तव्य उनको नहीं देना चाहिए था। मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि ऐसी स्थिति में इस तरह का वक्तव्य आना बहुत ही आपत्तिजनक है। नहीं आना चाहिए था।

दूसरी बात यह कहना चाहता हूं जैसा हमारे अन्य साथियों ने कहा है कि वहां पर मन्दिर है। लोग बराबर आते-जाते रहते हैं। इतने दिनों से जब लोगों का आना जाना है, ट्रैफिक वहां से गुजरता है तो फिर अधिकारियों ने क्यों नहीं इस तरह की व्यवस्था की कि वहां पर फाटक बनाया जाए, एक चौकीदार को रखा जाए, वहां पर सुरक्षात्मक उपाय किये जायें। इससे लगता है अधिकारियों का रवैया लापरवाही का रहा है। मैं चाहूंगा जो जांच रिपोर्ट आये उसमें इन बिन्दुओं पर भी विचार होना चाहिए। मैं मंत्री जी से भी कहना चाहूंगा कि इस लापरवाही के लिए जो भी जिम्मेदार हो उसको सजा मिलनी ही चाहिए। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि इस संबंध में वह क्या कार्रवाई करने जा रहे हैं।

यह बात सही है बच्चे तो बच्चे हैं। मां-बाप तो यह आशा लगाये हुए थे कि बच्चे मिलेंगे

से हँसी-खुशी लौटेंगे । उनकी प्रतीक्षा कर रहे हैं । रेलवे मिनिस्टर ने उनको जो कम्पनसेशन दिया वह तो दिया ही है । इसके बावजूद मेरा आग्रह है कि आप सिग्नल और कॉशनरी की तोड़ दीजिए । बच्चे तो आने वाले नहीं हैं लेकिन बच्चों के माता-पिता की सहानुभूति के तौर पर अधिक से अधिक धनराशि देने की व्यवस्था कीजिए ।

मैं अपने उन सहयोगी की बात से सहमत हूं जिन्होंने यह कहा है कि क्रासिंग जो क्रासिंग है और ऐसी जगहों पर जहां बहुत ट्रैफिक है वहां पर सुरक्षात्मक प्रबन्ध करने के लिए इस बजट में प्रावधान कीजिये ताकि आने वाले दिनों में ऐसी दुर्घटनाओं के लोग शिकार न हो सकें । हम लोग यह चाहते हैं कि ऐसी स्थिति दुबारा नहीं आनी चाहिए ।

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS (Orissa) : Mr. *Vice-Chair man,* Sir, this is not only an acci-dent bat an unfortunate incident. Nothing can compensate for the valuable innocent lives. "No doubt this House extends its heartiest condolences to the bereaved families but the way the Railway Ministry has shifted Hie responsibility on the driver of the bus- is-very, very unfortunate. Even if we demand the resignation of both ' the Railway Ministers; that cannot be com-patisd with those innocent lives. They have to take full responsibility for the accident. A mere statement is not going to bring relief to We parents and families of (he deceased children and others . .. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JOHAN F. FERNA'NDES : It was the mistake of the-bus driver.

SHRIMATT MIRA DAS: You say this because tie is-dead. And He can testify before any Commission, if at all there is going to be one.

SHRI K. C. LENKA : I ant ready to resign if it can bring the children to life.

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS: Sir, T share with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Members of this House. The Minister has-categorically denied that the driver of the train was responsible. He said that the driver had tried his Best to avoid the accident. Mr. Suresh Kaimadi questioned the constitution of an Enquiry Commission. I think it is not at all necessary.

1 would like to make mention—Mr. Suresh Katmadi has also made this point which is, *Very* vital -that all the level cros-sings on lire highways should- be provided with boards of caution Written in local language. Most of the drivers are illiterate and thay *are not* fee in a position to under-starid the caution in English such as, "Life is valuable. Save the life.", etc. For them it is not possible to understand what is written on such boards/ Such warnings should be written in local language.

SHRI MISA R. GANESAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, in this particular rail accident, in addition to the bus driver, the railway authorities' gross negligence is also to be blamed. The local people of Loni village had repeatedly requested the railway authorities to erect a manned gate sensing danger in that area. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any such plea has been received by the local railway authorities from the residents of Loni village for erecting a manned gate at this particular level crossing. If go, why the local railway authorities could not fulfil their demand ?

Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SEB-TEY RAZI): Now, Shri Bapu Kaldate.

डा० बापू कालदाते : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह बड़ी दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण घटना है । 11 तारीख को जब यह बड़ा हादसा हुआ, बड़ा एक्सीडेंट हुआ तो दुर्भाग्यवश उसी दिन लातूर से मैं पूना आ रहा था । भूकम्पग्रस्त इलाके से पूना आ रहा था और 4 बजे के दरमियान उसी गांव लोणी में था । वहां पर बहुत बड़ी भीड़ देखी तो रूक कर पूछा कि क्या हो गया है ? मैंने जा कर देखा, लेकिन वह दृश्य ऐसा था जिसको देखा नहीं जा सकता था, इतना मैं कह सकता हूं । यहां

पर दो तीन प्रश्न उपस्थित होते हैं । एक तो यह है कि सरकार का जो रवैया है वह मेरी दृष्टि से अच्छा नहीं हैं । पूना और महाराष्ट्र के सभी लोगों की दृष्टि से मोस्ट केजुअल और कैसस है, इसके अलावा इसके लिए कोई दूसरा शब्द नहीं है क्योंकि यह जो संख्या है इसके बयान में 38 बताई गई, लेकिन यह 40 हो गई है । दो लोग और मर गये हैं । यह भी इसमें होना चाहिए था क्योंकि मैं 12 तारीख को पूना में ही था । शाम को वहां से निकला हूं । इसलिए कहना पड़ता है कि इनका रवैया टोटली कैलस है । ऐसा निवेदन आपने यहां पर क्यों किया है, यह मेरी समझ में नहीं आता है । इसको इन्हें नहीं लाना चाहिए था । सत्य से डरना कोई अच्छी बात नहीं है । जो सच है वह लोगों के सामने आना चाहिए क्योंकि सच के आधार पर लोग कुछ रचनात्मक सूचनायें कर सकते हैं । असत्य के आधार पर सूचनायें क्या करें ? इतना ही कह सकते हैं कि यह असत्य है । इसमें जो सबसे बड़ी दुख की बात है वह यह है कि प्रकाश काम्बले नाम के व्यक्ति हैं जिनका इकलौता लड़का इसमें मारा गया है, उनका कुछ कहना है । ये इम्पोरन्स में काम करते हैं । उनकी क्या प्रतिक्रिया है, इसको आप देखें । उनका कहना है कि सरकार का बयान मोस्ट डिसएपाइन्टिड है । केन्द्रीय सरकार कुछ कहती हैं और स्टेट गवर्नमेंट कुछ कहती है । एक कहता है कि यह हुआ और दूसरा कहता है यह नहीं हुआ । They are trying to pass the buck which has nothing to do wife the lives of the people.

इसके लिए कौन जिम्मेदार है इससे लोगों को कोई मतलब नहीं है।

5. P.M.

राज्य सरकार हो या आपकी सरकार हो, यह बात सत्य है कि वहां 40 छोटे बच्चे जो फूल जैसे थे, वे उभरने से पहले ही कुचल दिये गये, इसकी जिम्मेदारी कोई ले या न ले । एक बार कहा कि इन्क्वारी करायेंगे और दूसरी बात कहते हैं कि बस स्पीड से चल रही थी । यह तो रेल के ड्राइवर ने खुद कहा है कि मेरी गाड़ी 4 घंटे लेट हो गयी थी और मैं 90 की स्पीड से चला रहा था । गाड़ी की 90 की स्पीड से चलाना ठीक है या नहीं है, या बस ड्राइवर ने देखा या नहीं देखा इससे हमको कोई मतलब नहीं है । हमारा मतलब यह है कि जो दुर्घटना हुई जिसमें इतने मासूम बच्चे, जो खेलने के लिए गये थे, मन बहलाने के लिये गये थे, आनन्द के लिये गये थे, सैर के लिये गये थे, इन सारी चीजों को देखने की मंशा को लेकर गये थे, वे सारे इस दुर्घटना में मर गये । एक बात मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि आप इस स्टेटमेंट को वापस लें । जब तक आपकी इन्क्वायरी पूरी नहीं होती है आपको कोई अधिकार नहीं है, यह कहने का कि स्पीड में कौन था, कौन गलत था, कौन सही था । इसलिये पहले आप इसको विदड्रा कीजिये ।

दूसरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि यह जो कम्पनसेशन का मामला है, कभी कभी सरकार बिल्कुल टेकनीकल बन जाती है । "नाट अलाउड," कई बातें रेलवे में ऐसी हैं, आप जानते है कि "नाट अलाउड" होती हैं, हम भी मुसाफिरी करते हैं, हम बहुत सालों में मुसाफिरी कर रहे हैं और जानते है कि नाट अलाउड हैं लेकिन चल रही हैं। लेकिन

It is the duty of the Government to respond.

जो सरकार जनता की आकांक्षाओं के प्रति संवेदनशीलता नहीं दिखाती है वह सरकार देश को चलाने के लायक नहीं है । ये कहते हैं कि हमको अलाउड नहीं है । कानून तो हम लोगोंने ही बनाया है । अगर सदन आपको कहता है तो मैं ऐसे सजेशन दूं कि सदन से श्रेष्ठ कोई नहीं है । अगर आपके कानून में नहीं है तो आप आज ही इस सदन में कम्पनसेशन के लिये कानून पास करायें । हम देने के लिये तैयार हैं । यह कहना कि अलाउड नहीं है । I think the bureaucracy has lost the sense of humanity.

इनकी संवेदनशीलता क्षीण हो गया है।

ब्यूरोक्रेसी की संवेदनशीलता क्षीण हो गयी है, आप लोगों की संवेदनशीलता क्षीण हो गयी है। लेकिन यह क्षीणता अच्छी नहीं है। मैं आपको कहता हूं कि जो कम्पन्सेशन देना है वह दिया जाय। रायट्स का कंपन्सेशन कहां मिलता था, अभी कल का अभी-अभी हुआ। ये बातें कानून से नहीं चलती हैं, ये बातें आत्मा से चलती हैं, संवेदनशीलता से चलती हैं, सद्भाव से चलती हैं, सौहार्द से चलती है, सहानुभूति से चलती हैं। अगर सौहार्द सहानुभूति और सद्भाव नहीं होगा तो कोई भी कानून नहीं है जो आपको उन लोगों की मदद करने के लिये सहायता दे सके। मैं यह चाहता हूं और यह सारे सदन की इच्छा इस मामले में यह है कि जिन मासूम बच्चों का निधन हुआ है, उनके लिये कम्पनसेशन अति आवश्यक है, ऐसा मैं मानता हूं। आपने माथुर साहब, जो एडिशनल जनरल मैनेजर हैं उनका बयान है कि :

Ex-gratia payment of Rs. 500 to Rs. 2,000.

काहे के लिये ऐसा मजाक करते हैं। आप क्या समझते हैं कि आपसे 500 से उनकी जिंदगी चलने वाली हो सकती है, जो अपने बच्चे खो बैठे हैं। जो मृतक लोग हैं उनके परिवारों के प्रति इस तरह का मजाक कर आप उनके जख्मों पर नमक छिड़कने का काम करेंगे, ऐसा आपको नहीं करना चाहिये। मैं कहता हूं कि दि गवर्नमेंट मस्ट कम फारवर्ड इन दि हाउस कि हमारे पास कंपन्सेशन का कानून नहीं है और हम तब्दीली करना चाहते हैं। अगर आप तब्दीली करना चाहते हैं तो जरूर करिये। यह होना चाहिये।

महोदय, आप जानते होंगे कि पुणे-लोनी इंडस्ट्रियल बेल्ट है। पूना में मैं पढ़ा हूं। Prate-Lorn is an industrial belt. मुझे यह कहना है पहले वहां सिर्फ लोग छुट्टी के दिन जाते थे। लेकिन शायद रेल विभाग देखता नहीं है। अब वहां काफी आबादी हो गयी है। वहां पर फिलिप्स की जो कंपनी है वहां रेलवे ब्रिज है, ऊपर से भी और नीचे से भी यातायात होता है। वह सारा इंडस्ट्रियल एरिया बन गया है और यातायात बढ़ गया है और वहां पर बहुत आना जाना होता है। इन बातों को ध्यान में न रखते हुए पुरानी बातों को कहकर सदन को इस तरह से आश्वासित करना यह सदन को आश्वासित करना नहीं है बल्कि खुद को फंसाने की बात है, ऐसा मैं मानता हूं। इसलिए न आप खुद फंसिये और न हमको फंसाने का प्रयास कीजिये। जो दुखद घटना हुई है पूरे दिल से बाहर आ कर कहिये कि इसमें हमदर्दी के साथ हम ये करने के लिये तैयार हैं। मैं आपसे यह चाहूंगा कि पूरी हमदर्दी को सक्रियता से दिखाने का आश्वासन हमें इस सदन में आप दीजिये।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Before I call the next speaker, I would like to inform the Members that there is a statement by Mr. Jakhar. Then there is another statement regarding the withdrawal of the strike by the staff unions of the Postal employees. There are five more speakers on this statement. I request the Members to be a little brief and not repeat the clarifications which had already been asked by the other Members. If you agree, first we will conclude this statement. Then we will switch-over to the other statements.

SHRI S. VIDHUTHALA I VIRUMBI: (Tamil Nadu) Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir I suggest one thing. Let the Minister reply to this. Then, they can lay the other statements on the Table and tomorrow we can duiscuss them.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : That is not the procedure. If you agree, I will first finish this statement. Then, Mr. Balram Jakhar will make a statement. Of course, there will be clarifications. After that, the statement on the Postal employees will come. Now, Shri N. Giri Prasad.

SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD (Andhra Pradesh) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I join the other Members of the House in expres-

sing our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Really, it is an unfortunate incident. But, unfortunately, the Minister has already come to a decision. He has pre-judged the issue. Perhaps, there may be some motive behind it. The real culprit has to be identified. The option is, either the bus driver or the train driver. That is the option. Perhaps, the Minister must be under the impression that if the train driver is found to be the culprit, he has to go. So. in order to save his skin ... AN HON. MEMBER : The bus driver is dead.

SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD : That is not the point What is the business for the Minister to pin down that the train driver is not responsible and that the bus driver is responsible ? But even then, according to his statement, "it appears that the driver of the ill-fated bus while taking the turn to cross the level crossing, perhaps, stalled because he could not change the gear ... "—who told you?—..." in time as there is a gradient." There is a gradient. Already the train hit the bus in the tail end. That mean a portion of the bus has already crossed. So, whatever it is, it is not necessary . apportion the blame to this driver or that driver. Here, it is only to evade the main issue. He wanted to divert the attention of the whole House. It is highly uncalled for. He should have been more responsible in presenting the case. Of course, we cannot bring back the lives of those unfortunate children and the other people who died. But the main problem is that it is not the first day that we are discussing here. There are hundreds of rail accidents caused by so many other reasons, and we are not discussing that just now. But as far as this problem of level crossing is concerned, there are thousands and thousands of level crossings. Every level crossing is a death-trap, as one of our friends said here. There is a risk of having an accident. Now the trains are speeded up like anything. The trains are to increase the speed more and more. There are double lines. One does not know which train passes which way. If there are no maimed gates, even if one cross one line, it is difficult to cross the other line. Nobody knows on which line the train passes. And the frequency of the trams is also increasing because of the needs of traffic. They are increasing, the number trains, both passenger and ;goods trains. Therefore unless the Government, unless the Railway Ministry,takes a policy decision to convert; all the unmanned level crossings into manned level crossings, there is no security.Of course it is not that an unmanned level crossing is going to load to accidents always. I do not say that. But there is everys pos-sibility. These, are potential dangerous spots. Therefore, the question, should be considered from that point of view.

There are so many devices other friends have suggested; here. You can think of constructing a, low bridge without putting any person; there at the gate. You can consider this suggestion if it is cost-efiective. You can explore anyof these methods. It may be a lowbridge Or an overbridge or a manned level crossing. Bus: this point should be considered because I have also represented one or two cases. The places which were earliar be ing manned have been converted into unmanned level crossings. They have re-aioved the gatemen at these places. There fore. I suggest that the Ministry should think of devising some method tin ragard to these unmanned level crossing so that such accidents do not recur.This is the only way out whatever,,be the outcome of the enquiry.

SHRI S.S, SURJEWALA (Haryana) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, at the fag end of clarifications, I would not like to take much time:

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIB-TEY RAZI) : There are four or five more. You are not at the fag end.

SHRI S.S. SURJEWALA : Sir, I very strongly endorse the views expressed by Mr. M.C. Bhandare and Mr. Vishvjit Singh. As far as the unmainned level cros--ings are concerned, I would urge upon the hon. Minister that the Railway Minis-try should take a police decioiors vert all these Into manned level crossings

Half of the cost in respect of this can be Some by the States. there should sot be any . delay in implementing this decision.

As far as the statement of the hon. Minister is concerned, I think, keeping in view the concensus of the House, I world very much appreciate if the statement is withdrawn. The Minister should come out with a fresh statement in which he Should also clarify the safety measures which the Railway Ministry proposes to take to ensure that In fuure no such tra-gady, no such tiresome tragedy, like the one which took place the other day near *Pune* takes place.

I have one clarification to seek from tile hon. Minister. In the case of ray state Haryana, the RailWay Ministry has abolished 21 manned level crossings. The who w kid are taken off from these level crossing. They haw been withdrawn. These level crossings have been converted into unmanned level crossings. These are not situated kutcha path as in the precent case; they are on roads. I may refer here to one level crossing which is situated near my village. It is on the Nar-WEna4tHrt*ifcetr« Section of the railways. The interodistrict rond from Narwana to Kaithal passes through this level crossing. This Was there for last twenty years. Now along With so other manned level crossings,this has also been abolished. The chowkidar posted there has been withdrawn Therefore.I would request the hon. Minister, Mr. Lenka, to see that men are posted at all these level crossings in my State from where they have been Withdrawn keeping in view this tragedy and keeping in view the consensus of the House. I Hope the Minister will enlighten this House.

श्री [illegible] (पंजाब) : जनाब सभापति साहब, मैं सिर्फ एक शेर है:

"फसादी सब घरों को जा चुके हैं,
मुहाफिज सब दरो-दीवार पर खड़े हैं।"

बच्चे जो बिना खिले मुरझा गए, कितने घर [illegible] हम ऐसा स्टेटमेंट दे कर संगड़े बहाने तसल्ली करते हैं। जहां पे जो अपनी गफलत है और जो हमारी जिम्मेवारी है उस पे पर्दापोशी करने की बात करते हैं, यह मुल्क के साथ भी ज्यादती है और इस हाउस के साथ भी ज्यादती है। हम यहां पे सिर्फ इजहार-ए-अफसोस करने के लिए जब ऐसे वाकयात हो जाएं तो न इकट्ठे हों और ऐसे स्टेटमेंट न दें, बल्कि ऐसी ट्रेजडी से बड़ी सीरियसनैस के साथ कुछ सबक सीखना चाहिए और इस बात का सोचना चाहिए कि वाकयात फिर न हों। यह हमारी बदकिस्मती है कि हम इजहार-ए-अफसोस के लिए ही यहां बात करते हैं। ऐसे कई वाकयात हुए हैं पंजाब में भी एक ऐसा ही वाकया हुआ था और बेतहाशा लोग इस अनमैंड क्रॉसिंग के ऊपर एक टैंपो गुजर रहा था तो बहुत से लोग मरे थे। तब भी इस किस्म की बातें यहां की गई थीं, इजहार-ए-अफसोस किया गया था। लेकिन वह नशस्त गुफ्तम, बरखास्तम, इसका कोई फायदा नहीं। जो बेसिक प्राब्लम है अनमैंड क्रॉसिंग की उस पे कोई जैसी तवज्जह दी जानी चाहिए रियल्ली ओपिएंटेड बात होने की वैसी कोई तवज्जह नहीं दी जा रही है। मैं बिल्कुल भंडारे साहब से मुत्तफिक हूं कि इससे कम किसी बात पर हमें इत्तफाक नहीं करना चाहिए कि जितना चाहे खर्च हो, यह जो मुल्क में अनमैंड क्रॉसिंग है, इनको एबालिश करके मैंड क्रॉसिंग बनाए जाएं और अगर तमाम बातों के बावजूद कभी ऐसी ट्रेजडी हो तो उसके लिए हम हमारी एक जामे और बाजे पालिसी होनी चाहिए।

यह बड़े अफसोस की बात है कि वह नन्हें-मुन्ने बच्चे, वह कहते हैं ना, "हसरत तो उन गुंचों पे है जो बिन खिले मुरझा गए" जिन्होंने जिंदगी की अभी सुबह ही नहीं देखी थी, वे बच्चे चले गए। उनके मां-बाप से पूछिए कि उनके साथ क्या हुआ। हमारी यहां सारी बातें और इजहार-ए-अफसोस उनके दिलों का जो चैन है उसको वापस नहीं ला सकता, लेकिन हम अपने फर्ज को सही पूरा कर सकते हैं कि

आज हाउस रेलवे मिनिस्टर साहब से इस बात का तकाजा करे कि वह बाजे तौर पर यह एलान करें कि जो मुल्क में अनमैंड क्रासिंग हैं उनको बिल्कुल एबालिश करके और सारी इस सिचुएशन को रेब्यु होना चाहिए कि यह क्या बात है । कई वाके तो आपके नोटिस में आ जाते हैं लेकिन मैं आपकी खिदमत में यह कहना चाहता हूं कि बेशुमार ऐसे वाकयात हैं जो इस हाउस की नजर में या अखबारों की जीनत नहीं बनते क्योंकि वह दूर दराज इलाकों में होते हैं, गांवों में होते हैं । बड़े लोग मर जाते हैं और लोकल तौर पर ही बात को दफना दिया जाता है लेकिन उनके घरों में भी वैसी ही तकलीफ होती है जैसे आज चालीस अच्छे मरे हैं । उनके घरों में जो मातम छाया है । तो मैं आपकी वसातत से हाउस की तरफ से रेलवे मिनिस्टर साहब को यह कहना चाहता हूं कि यह बिल्कुल बहुत हो गया यह जबानी जमा-खर्च करते हुए, सुनते हुए बहुत हो गया, कोई बाजा जामा पालिसी बनानी चाहिए और जो सुझाव पृथ्वीजित जी ने दिए हैं और भंडारे साहब ने दिए हैं मैं उन की पुरजोर ताईद करता हूं ।

समय बहुत हो गया है, मैं यह चाहता हूं कि इन दोनों बातों पै रेलवे मिनिस्टर साहब बिल्कुल बाजे तौर पर इनको आज जवाब देना चाहिए ।

SHRI DAVID LEDGER (Assam) : Sir, this is not the first time that accidents have taken place at unmanned level crossing. In fact, we find that a number of accidents are taking place at these unmanned level crossings. I feel, it is high time that the Government got up and took a serious note of this.

Sir, I would like to have a categorical assurance from the hon. Minister that all unmanned level crossings will be converted into manned level crossings, and it will be given the topmost priority and included in the next Plan. I would also like to join my colleagues in demanding payment of compensation to the families of those who have lost their lives in the tragic accident. The policy of giving compensation to the injured by ignoring the families of those who have lost their lives amounts to a clear discrimination. So I would request the hon. Minister to consider this and arrange for payment of compensation to the families of the 38 people who have died, including the 34 school children.

Sir, we find, in the statement that apart from the 34 school children, two lady teachers, one peon and one cleric hive also lost their lives, in the accident. I think it would be in the fitness of things if jobs are provided to one member of each of the families of the deceased because it is obvious that they: were earning members of their families I would like to have an assurance from the hon. Minister in this regard also.

Thank you.

श्री सच्चिदानन्द (कर्नाटक) : वाइसचैयरमेन साहब, मेरे सभी साथी इस अन-मैन्ड रेलवे क्रासिंग के कारण हुई दुर्घटना के बारे में जो मैं कहना चाहता था, वह कह चुके हैं । महोदय, रेलवे मंत्रालय इतना बड़ा मंत्रालय है जबकि इसमें 15 हजार अन-मैन्ड रेलवे क्रासिंग अभी तक चले आ रहे हैं । मेरे ख्याल से रेलवे मंत्रालय को खुद अपने कर्मचारी वहां से हटाने के बजाय सभी अन-मैन्ड रेलवे क्रासिंग को मैन्ड-रेलवे क्रासिंग में बदलने की योजना बना लेनी थी क्योंकि पहले कई बार अन-मैन्ड रेलवे क्रासिंग पर इस प्रकार की दुर्घटना हो चुकी है । तो क्या रेलवे मंत्री इस संबंध में आश्वासन देंगे और जैसा कि मेरे साथियों ने भी मांग की है सभी अन-मैन्ड रेलवे क्रासिंग को मैन्ड रेलवे क्रासिंग में बदलने की योजना बनाएंगे ?

दूसरी बात, हमारे मित्र श्री जाफर शरीफ जोकि रेल मंत्री है, तुरन्त दुर्घटना स्थल पर पहुंच गए और जितने भी लोगों की इस दुर्घटना में मृत्यु हुई थी, उनके परिवार के साथ सहानुभूति व्यक्त की और उनको चिकित्सा का प्रबंध किया ।

साथ ही मुझे आशा थी कि जैसेकि पहले कई दुर्घटनाओं में हमारे रेल मंत्री ने उसी स्थान पर घोषणा की थी, वह इस बार भी दुर्घटना स्थल पर ही कम्पनसेशन के संबंध में घोषणा करेंगे ताकि दुर्घटना से प्रभावित परिवारों को तुरन्त कम्पनसेशन की राशि मिल सके। बजाय इसके कि रेल मंत्री इस सदन के सदस्यों की मांग के बाद कम्पनसेशन की बात को कनसीड करते हैं, अगर रेल मंत्रीजी दुर्घटना स्थल पर ही इसकी घोषणा कर देते तो बहुत अच्छा होता। उससे रेल मंत्रालय की शान बनी रहती और वह उसकी उदारता की भी प्रतीक होती।

महोदय, अपने सभी साथियों की तरह मेरी भी मांग है कि रेल मंत्रालय को कम्पनसेशन की राशि के पूर्ण भुगतान की बात तुरन्त स्वीकार कर लेनी चाहिए। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूं और आपने मुझे इस गंभीर विषय पर स्पष्टीकरण पूछने का मौका दिया, इसके लिए धन्यवाद देता हूं।

SHRI HIPHEI (Mizoram) : Sir, I Will take only one minute. "It is learnt that the driver of the train whisteled heavily and tried to slow down." Due to this the first bus could pass the level crossing. It could be easily presumed that for the second bus the train could have stopped totally, if this is correct. If the train driver whistled heavily and tried to slow down the train, and due to that the first bus could pass the level crossing, for the second bus the train could have stopped totally. That is my presumption. "It appears that the driver of the ill-fated bus, while taking the turn to cross the level crossing, perhaps, stalled because he could not change the gear in time as there is a gradient." According to these two sentences, how, the first one is to justify the train driver. The second indirectly condemns the bus driver or puts the blame on the bus driver indirectly ; or the skill of the bus driver is doubted according to this. So, if this cannot be amended, if thee two sentences are correct, then what is the use of having an Inquiry Committee ? Until and unless the Inquiry Committee report is available, these two sentences may kindly be amended. Otherwise, if they are to be accepted as they are today, it appears that it blames the bus-driver and justifies the action of the train-driver. If the hon. Minister can give clarifications to my satisfaction, I will accept them. If not, these two sentences are not acceptable. It is a prejudgement.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Shri V.M. Jadhav, I request you to cover your clarifications within two or three minutes.

श्री विट्ठलराव माधवराव जाधव : (महाराष्ट्र) उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह मेरा क्षेत्र है पूना का, इसलिए मुझे ज्यादा जानकारी है इसके बारे में। सिर्फ दो मिनट ज्यादा दें।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Please ask your questions.

श्री विट्ठलराव माधवराव जाधव : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह जो एक्सीडेंट हुआ है, बहुत दुखदायी है। महाराष्ट्र में एक के बाद एक नैसर्गिक आपत्ति आती जा रही है। पहले हमारे यहां अर्थक्वेक हुआ, अब उसके बाद एक्सीडेंट होते रहे। यह छोटे-छोटे बच्चे, मैं बहुत अच्छी तरह से उस स्कूल को जानता हूं, जिसको पहले न्यू इंगलिश स्कूल कहते थे, वह पुरन्दरे विद्यालय के बच्चे पिकनिक पर जा रहे थे। यह पूना से कोल्हापुर का सारा क्षेत्र जो है, यहां से रेल लाइन जाती है, मेरे मित्र बापू जी भी इससे वाकिफ हैं और मेरे ख्याल से जाफर शरीफ साहब भी जानते हैं, कि पूरी इंडस्ट्रियल बेल्ट है, यह बहुत थिकली पापुलेटेड एरिया है और रेल लाइन के दोनों बाजू में बहुत सी इंडस्ट्री है। यह वाकया एक बस एक्सीडेंट होने से सामने आया है, लेकिन न जाने वहां रेलवे लाइन क्रासिंग होने की वजह से पहले कितनी बार एक-एक, दो-दो कामगारों की या लेबर की जाने गई हैं, इसके बारे में कोई रिकार्ड नहीं है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं, मान्यवर रेल मंत्री जी से कि बंबई से पूना, पूना से कोल्हापुर तक, जो महाराष्ट्र का सबसे अच्छा डवलपमेंट बेल्ट है,

क्या वहां पर रेलवे क्रासिंग पर ओवरब्रिज नहीं होना चाहिए, जहां कि बड़ी रोड है और जहां छोटी रोड है वहां गेट बनाकर आदमी नहीं रखे जाना चाहिए ? लेकिन वहां कोई व्यवस्था नहीं है और बहुत सी जगह तो भगवान के नाम पर सारे गेट खुले छोड़ दिए गए हैं जहां कि एक्सीडेंट होते रहते है ।

महोदय, अभी नई रेल लाइन भी हमारे हिन्दुस्तान में बन रही है । मैं रेल मंत्री जी से यह एसोरेन्स चाहूंगा कि जो नई लाइन बन रही है वहां तो आखिर कम से कम अभी से इंतजाम कीजिए कि वहां कोई अनमेन गेट न रहे । वहां रेलवे क्रासिंग पर चाहे तो आप ओवरब्रिज बनाएं या गेट बना कर आदमी बैठाएं । दूसरा, यह कि सायरन सिस्टम भी हो सकता है । आप सोलार बैटरी ऐसी लगाएं कि अगर जब कोई ट्रेन आती है तो उसका उससे संबंध हो ताकि रेलगाड़ी आने लगे तो सायरन हो कि गाड़ी आ रही है, जैसे टेलीविजन पर दिखता है कोई बात आने के बाद । ऐसी कोई व्यवस्था नई आधुनिकतम टैक्नोलोजी में हो सकती है तो उसके बारे में विचार करें ताकि यहां गेट बनाना असंभव है और आदमी भी उपलब्ध नहीं है तो वहां सोलार बैटरी सिस्टम जैसी व्यवस्था हो सके । इसका भी मैं मंत्री महोदय से जवाब चाहता हूं ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं यह पहली मांग करता हूं कि बंबई से पूना, पूना से कल्हापुर तक कोई भी रेलवे क्रोसिंग अनमेन न रहे । इसके बारे में अभी से, कल से ही इंतजाम शुरु कर देना चाहिए क्योंकि वहां पर बहुत सा स्टुडेन्ट पापुलेशन है, लेबर पापुलेशन है, एग्रो इंडस्ट्री है और वहां बहुत हैवी ट्रैफिक होता है । तो इसके बारे में गंभीरता से सोचना बहुत जरूरी है ।

महोदय, यहां कम्पनसेशन के बारे में बात उठाई गई । आपके स्टेटमेंट में यह दिया है कि स्कूल के बच्चे होने की वजह से कोई कंपनसेशन नहीं दिया गया । यह स्कूल के बच्चे तो हमारे देश की अगली संपत्ति है, यह भविष्य है हमारे देश का । इतनी जानें चली गई ....(**व्यवधान**).....

श्री के०सी०लेंका : ऐसा नहीं है . . .(**व्यवधान**)

श्री जगेश देसाई : कंपनसेशन दिया है, मगर घायलों को दिया है . . .(**व्यवधान**)

श्री चिदम्बरम माधवराव गाडगिल : मृत लोगों को भी देना चाहिए । मैं वही बात कह रहा हूं कि जिन्होंने लाइफ गंवाई है, जिनकी जानें गई हैं, जैसे पूर्व में रेलवे क्रोसिंग में या रेल ऐक्सीडेंट में मरे लोगों के आश्रितों को दिया है उसी बेसिस पर विचार करके, उनको जल्दी से जल्दी कंपनसेशन देना चाहिए । साथ ही मेरी जो पहली इम्पोर्टेण्ट मांग है उसको भी देखना चाहिए कि बंबई से पूना और पूना से कोल्हापुर तक रेलवे ट्रैक कोई अनमेन न रहे । या तो आप ओवरब्रिज वहां बनवाइए क्योंकि बहुत हैवी ट्रैफिक है और जहां ओवरब्रिज बनाना अभी संभव नहीं, मैं जानता हूं रेलवे की आर्थिक स्थिति को, तो वहां गेट तो असानी से बना सकते है । इस संबंध में इस सदन में मैं माननीय रेलवे मंत्री जी से एसोरेन्स चाहता हूं । धन्यवाद ।

SHRI K. C. LENKA : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, we are all deeply concerned over this tragic accident. When we had heard about it, we were really shocked. A number of accidents occurred in the past in the railways but this accident shocked us very much because a large number of children died in this accident. On hearing this news, the Railway Minister, officials of the Railway Department and medical team immediately rushed to the spot and got an idea about the accident. So it was not correct to mention that the Railways have no sympathy or feeling for the children.

Not only that; the Minister of Railways immediately declared ex-gratia payment. So far as compensation in railway accidents is concerned, there are some norms. There is no provision to give compensation in these accidents. So out of the way, the Minister of Railways had declared some ex-gratia payment for the injured children for their treatment. And Rs. 2000 ...

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE : This Rs. 2000 as compensation is adding insult to the injury 9*Interruptions)* ...

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Every day decisions are taken by the Government which do not follow the norms. In this particular case, the entire Parliament is asking, "Please give compensation. Please give an assurance that you are going to give compensation."

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : The Government of Maharashtra is capable of giving more than Rs. 20,000 as compensation. . .. *(Interrup-itons)* ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Honourable Members, please take your seats. The hon. Railway Minister is intervening. I think he will give some satisfactory reply. . . . *(Interruptions')* . .. First listen to the hon. Railway Minister, then, you can give your reaction.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, as my esteemed colleague has already said, we can understand the strong feelings of the Members particularly when, unfortunately, very young children were involved. In fact, yesterday when I was moving from one child to another child in the hospital, I could not reconcile myself. They were very innocent children and it was a most unfortunate incident.

An hon. Member has wondered whether what we have mentioned in our statement about the driver was appropriate or not, whether it would amended or it would not be amended. I may mention here that the Railways is not speaking for itself. Whatever is contained in the statement is the considered view of not only of the Railways but also of the authorities of the State Government who were there even much before.us. The District Magistrate, the local police, the Mayor of the Municipal Corporation and representatives of the people, the parents, the nearest and the dearest of the children and everybody was there. Although it was around 1.30 A. M in the night and there was nothing to see on the spot, I did make it a point to visit the spot because I knew that unless we go to the spot, we will not be able to face the Parliament and tell the truth Sir, it is most unfortunate, it is so tragic the driver walked into the death-trap. The train and the bus were going in the same direction; they were not going in different directions. One can imagine the speed of the train the noise it makes as it comes closer. No one can say that it will not be heard. Unfortunately, the children belonging to the same institution were in two buses and one ventured and crossed; the other also crossed, but, I was told—on opinions secured by the local police from the driver who is alive—that the driver could not change the gear in time. So the back side of the bus was hit and the bus was thrown up. That ended in this most unfortunate mishap.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Sir, I am on a point of order.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Let the Minister complete his statement. Then you can ask.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Sir, 1 am not making any statement here based on assumptions and presumptions.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE : We will deal with it. You complete your statement.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : I had gone there. 1 was not an eye-witness. The information was collected by the local authorities, by the Deputy Commissioner, the Collector, the Superintendent of Police and our railway officials from the people who were travelling in the train and who got down, the people who helped in carry ing the children to the other bus and the people who helped in taking them to the hospital. It was everybody's account. All the pieces of information were put together and presented here. There is nothing I can add or subtract_____

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : If you have come to that conclusion, why did you order an inquiry ?

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Please bear with me for a couple of minutes, Mr. Narayanasamy. Let me complete.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : The Minister is still on his legs. He has not completed his statement. After he completes, if you seek my permission, I will permit supplementary clarifications. Please cooperate with me.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : It is customary that whenever there is an accident, whether the railways are directly involved or not, in any accident relating to the railways, even if there is an impression that there may be the involvement of the railways, although there is no involvement, we hold an inquiry. In the present case, the bus driver ventured and brought this tragedy. Still, the dicussion is taking place here. Why has the Railway Minister to answer this ? This is exactly the reason. Today, we may be having a discussion. Still, it is better, for record, for the future, to know if there is any lacuna on the part of the railways, that an inquiry should be conducted. It is a normal procedure. It is not to satisfy somebody else. It is to satisfy ourselves. Railways is a responsible system which carries thousands of passengers daily. It has its responsibilities towards the travelling public. So, we have to ascertain the facts. To satisfy you, to satisfy ourselves. . . *(Interruptions).*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : This is how a responsible Railway Minister answers "it is? Customary" "for record purpose what" is all this ?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : I will give you an opportunity later.

SHRI C. K. JAFER SHARIEF : If hon. Members do not have faith in us, I am helpless. I cannot say anything more.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: We have faith in him, Sir. That is why we are posing questions to him.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Then, do not attribute motives to me.

SHRI V.NARAYANASAMY: I am not attributing any personal motive to the Minister. I have reservations about the way in which the Minister is giving a statement here in this House. The Minister is saying that the driver is responsible. How can the Minister say that? He has to answer me on that point.

SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD : Moreover, Sir ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : I will give you an opportunity later on, Mr. Prasad. Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : I wish it proved otherwise. I do not know as to who is to be blamed for this. I da not want the poor driver to be responsible. But the fact remains that very precious lives we have lost. The other young children are suffering in the hospital. This fact cannot be ignored. It is for this reason that an enquiry is a must and it should be conducted. The enquiry should satisfy the public at large. If there are certain lacunae which are found during the course of enquiry, the same can be rectified to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future. So, in all fairness, an enquiry should we held and the facts should come out. Whatever we came to know, we have brought it before this House. *(Interrup-liotis)*

DR. BAPU KALDATE: Why are you saying this ? It is a statement by the Ministry.

ये क्यों नहीं लिखा कि हमको इसका पता लगा ?

If it is an authentic statement of the Ministry itself, then the responsibility lies with you. You are already saying that the driver had made a mistake. *(Interrup-toins)* You should have been more careful.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, in the enquiry that is conducted, if it is proved otherwise, then what will happen to the Minister's statement?

DR. BAPU KALDATE : The statement I does not say that is the information that you have collected. *{Interruptions)*

इसमें आपने यह क्यों नहीं लिखा कि यह हमारी जानकारी है ।

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : I thought that any-debate or clarification on such occasions will help us to correct the course in future rather than argue like in a criminal case before the court. There may be other people Who Will argue to defend the driver or the railways. We are here to correct the course to see how we can prevent such incidents in future.. *(Interrup tions)*

'I HE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIB TEY RAZI) : Mr. Minister, the anxiety of the hon. Members is that in your statement, your department has reached certain conclusions about the people who were found responsible for this ugly incident. Would you once again like to go through your statement and clarify the position ? Their point is that when ah enquiry has been instituted, nothing could be said like this that the inferences could be drawn. .

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Sir, let me go through the statement again. It says : "It is learnt that the driver of the train whistled heavily and tried to slow down. One bus - passed the level crossing, but the second bus was hit. It appears that the driver ' of the ill-fated bus"— please note the words 'it appears'—while taking the turn to cross the level crossing, perhaps,stalled because he could not change the gear in time ..." But you are grilling me simply without taking note of this fact. (Interruption*s)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIB TEY RAZI): Mr. Jadhav, don't mix up all the issues at one time. The Minister has read Out the portion about which you were Objecting- and he is very clear on this that it appears'. '

SHRI C. K.JAFFER SHARIEF : I hope the hon. Members are satisfied now. Coming to the level crossings-manned or unmanned—it is not as if something new has., happened, Whether I am the Railway Minister today or somebody else is the Railway Minister Today Or tomorrow we have to face the reality. I don't think anybody is above this House. The House is supreme. Both the Houses are supreme. Sir, .the problem is, in such a large country the total level crossings we have are 38,932; unmanned level crossings— 23,157; manned level crossings—15,775. The cost of manning one level crossing is Rs. 5 lakhs and the recurring expenditure per year would be Rs. 60,000. Sir, if the hon. Members can make it a mandate to the Finance Ministry and get me the money, 1 will be. one among them, I will be the happiest person,40 undertake ... *(Interruptions)* ...

AN HON. MEMBER: He has to approach the Ministry of Finance. . . . *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : If all of you decide that there should be a total plan holiday for some period till we complete this, we will do this, and nothing else. This is what you Want. It is your .,'. *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : On these routes, heavy traffic is there. You should review the system of safety. That is what I wanted. . . . *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, let us not have this confronta-ionist attitude. It is very unfair for the Minister to make a statement like this. I lake I objection to this. The hon. Minister is a friend of mine. For, him to say "Let us fake a plan holiday; .You tell me what I will do" or to make such caustic comments at this point of time is not correct. Kindly withdraw your words, Mr. Minister. At least, you have to say something ;. . . *(Interrtiptions)* ...

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Please hear with me. Bear.,with me ... *(Interrup-: tions)* ... Allow me to say ... *(Interrupt tions)* . ..

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: In the Plan allocation, some amount should be set apart for this. Maintenance of tracks and all these things are also part of your planning, and all plans are made for human beings, for the safety of

human drives If people lose their lives, what is the use of that planning ? It should be part of the planning. We know that it is not possible to man all the 38,000 gates within a year, but you can have some planning accordingly. That is what ! am pleading.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Sir, let Hie apologise if my expression has given any wrong impression. There is no question of my remarks being caustic. 1 do not mean it. I am a very humble person. I respect the House and I respect all the Members, There is no question of that kind of impression being carried at all. 1 only said it so that I can. get the guidance and advice of the House.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL (Bihar) : Sir. may I suggest to the hon. Minister one thing ? From time to time, we have been looking at these circumstances which are agonising. There is no new technology available whereby unmanned automatic gates can be installed. Would the hon. Minister examine the possibility of identifying such places where such automatic gates can be installed so that the cost is low and also, the ongoing cost is low ? This is something on which technology is available. And a Ministry like Railways which has a technology of its own, should examine it very early. And it can be easily done.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Yes, Mr. Bhandare. You listen to Mr. Bhandare also because he is very impatient for raising his supplementary.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE : I am not impatient at all. 1 have beta very quietly and patiently waiting. I want the hon. Minister . . . *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : What could T do when some senior Memeber just stands up and puts , his, supplementary ? You should follow the norms of this House. . . . *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI MINISTER CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Let all the Members put their supplementaries after seeking the permission of the Chair. .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI : Without the permission of the Chair if somebody stands up and says something, other Members who are really cooperative and disciplined will be the sufferers. *(Interruptions)* . . . Mr. Bhandare, please put your supplementary. *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: I don't want to put anything now. Let him complete. That is what 1 have been tiling you, but you ate permitting everybody. *(Interruptions)* . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI);.': I am not permitting! after-son is just taking the. floor. I amrespecting every Member and I think everyone will . . . (*Interruptions)* ...

SHRI i VISHVJIT P. SINGH : The Minister is yielding. *(Interruptions)* .. .

SHRI G. G. SWELL (Meghalaya) : A Member who can make a useful contribu-tion can intervene .. . *(Interrtiptions)* .. .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) ; That is true. Yes.Minister.

SHRI C. K. JAFER SHARIEF : Sir, I am grateful ta my friend, Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral, for his suggestion. I welcome his suggestion. I think the technology should be available; and we will certainly mate a fresh study *at* upgrading these level crossings based on the traffic norms. There are certain norms, Even those norms can be again looked into, if necessary, to modify them or to bring in some more changes. On the whole, it is not something which we are not doing. We are doing it gradually based on the traffic norms. We will certainly t;.kc it into account. We will, have a dialogue with the State Governments also. Sometimes requests come, sometimes sharing of costs comes. We will discuss it with them,also. It is our endeavour to see that such unfortunate accidents do not take place, we do not lose precious lives and we

avoid recurrence of such unfortunate happenings. Thank you. *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH. No, no. What about compensation *(fnterrup-tions)* ...

DR. BAPU KALDATE : What about compensation ? *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : What about compensation ? *(Interruptions)* ... He should not make any charity. *(Interruptions)* .. .

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE : May I say something ? *(Interruptions)* ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Do you want to say something just now ? *(Interruptions)* . . . Do you want to say something just now ? *(Interruptions)* ... Mr. Minister, please take your seat. *(Interruptions)* . .

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE : I would like to say that if he wants to say something about compensation, let him say. He has not said any thing about compensation. If he is going to say something, I will wait. I want to know about compensation. I am very clear about it. *(Interruptions)* . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Would you like to say something on this point, Mr. Minister ?

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Mr. Vice-Chairman, I do understand the anxiety of the Members. But unfortunately the Railways pay compensation where it is their direct responsibility. In this kind of accidents where the Railways are not at fault the responsibility . .. *(Interruptions)* . ..

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH: No, no. *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : How can the Railway Minister say that the Railways are not at fault ?

(Interruptions) . ..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : No, let him complete. *(Interruptions)* ... Hon, Members, let him complete, *(Interruptions)* .., Just a minute *(Interruptions)* . . . Let the Minister . . . *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN (Tamil Nadu) : When an enquiry is there, how could be say that ? *(Interruptions)* ...When there is an enquiry, how could he say that ? *(Interruptions)* . ..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Let the Minister complete his sentence. *(Interruptions)* . . .

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN : How could he say that ? *(Interruptions)* . ..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : He has not completed his sentence. *(Interruptions)* . . . Please, take your seat. *(Interruptions)* ... So far as I understand, the Minister has not completed his sentence. It may be in some context. *(Interruptions)* . .. Would you like to say something more on this point ?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : I have not been allowed to complete. *(Interruptions)* . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Yes, that I understand. *(interruptions)* . . .

Please listen to him. *(Interruptions)* ... Please listen quietly. *(Interruptions)* ... Please. *(Interruptions)* . . .

SHRI ASHIS SEN : Please allow me only one minute. *(Interruptions)* .. .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : I will give you time. Please be seated at the moment.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Sir, it is a question of norms which are being followed so far. I do understand the sympathy and the concern of the Members which I also equally share. Sir, as far as the ex-gratia payment is concerned, it is not a question of Rs. 2000. I committed yesterday that whatever is required for their complete recovery and complete treatment, will be met by us.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE : What about those who are dead ?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Please bear with me. As for those who are dead, in the existing norms, it does not coine under the Railways, tomorrow, ii the inquiry Committee holds the Railways responsible, naturally whenever such responsibility comes on the Railways, whatever compensation we would pay in other. cases, that would become applicable to this also. On the face of whatever material is before us, I don't think we can pay any compensation under these circumstances. *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : Sir, I can cite one example. Suppose there is a stray animal on the railway track and an accident occurs there, is the Railway Ministry not responsible tor it? They cannot say that because a stray animal came there, we cannot do anything. Sir, an accident has taken place and small children have died. The Railway Minister must give them compensation.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Sir 1 am totally disappointed. 1 have no words to express my disappointment. 1 must say that trie whole statement is disappointing. In the law of environmental protection, the liability is unconditional and absolute. I don't think that the Railways, who have an unmanned railway crossing Where there is no advance notice whatsoever of any train coming or going, can escape liability for an accident. if the hon. Minister wants, we will have it tested by the Supreme Court and the liability will be complete and unconditional. Let him not go by the so-called norms. I don't know what the basis of the norms is. I think this is a fit occasion for him to examine and generously offer what is due to those victims. *(Interruptions)* ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Let him complete.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Everybody knows what happened after the Bhopal gas tragedy. Everybody knows what happened after the DCM chemical leakage in the capital. There both said that they were not responsible. These are the most up-to-date plants. "What can we do ?" The Supreme Court said that their liability is complete and unconditional. 1 am not sure whether in this matter also, the hon. Minister has even examined this position *or* not. He has been guided by some incient norms which have no relevance and which are totally unrealistic. Therefore, without waiting for all these things, it will be in the fitness of things that the hon. Railway Minister makes a statement about compensations. Ultimately when you make an ex-gratia payment, that it-self means that you are not responsible. The ex-gratia proceeds on the basis that one is not liable to pay that amount yet one pays that amount. I think it would be gracious enough for the Railway Minister to say, "Yes, I am making that ex-gratia payment today without admitting any liability." That is open to him. i request the Railway Minister that he should make an appropriate announcement and commitment on behalf of the Railway Ministry.

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL (Gujarat) : Sir, I want to say one thing.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : You have already taken a lot of time. I am allowing. Mr. Ashis Sen.

SHRI ASHIS SEN : Sh, I was hearing with anguish the manner in which both the senior and the junior Ministers were trying to absolve themselves of their responsibility or of the Railways. It is not a question as to who is responsible. The question here is precious lives of children, teachers and clerks have been lost. If we

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go by norms, outdated norms this is impossible. He is talking of plan holiday, he is talking of the Finance Minister, I *do* not know if any thing sensible will come out of it. Sympathies are there. But there is no expression for implementing, them in practice. That is what the Ministers have been telling us. What I am trying to say is that lives have been lost and there have to be compensation. The

railways cannot escape from that responsibilty. My hon. colleague, Mr. Bhat has spoken. The accident would not have occurred had there been a manned level crossing. In the absence of a maimed level crossing, the accident has occurred. This is the responsibility of the 1 airways. the Minister has got to own it, rules or no rules. The question of blaming this man or that man does not arise. The question is that lives have been lost and that has to be noted. All the honesty, sincerity and sympathy that is being talked of, will not be enough. Compensation Si-got to be paid. I am not saying whether we can go to court or not. It is human aspect . .. *{Interruptions)* . . .

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE : How much Joe. the Government spend on the security of one VIP?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIB-TEY RAZI) : If the Minister wants . intervene, he will intervene . . . *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI DAVID LEDGER : Sir, I had sought one clarification and the Minister has not responded . . . *(Interruptions)* . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : He has to cover many more points. He has not finished yet.

SHRI DAVID LEDGER : He said he had finished.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : While his other Minister was replying, he just intervened. Mr. Jailer Sharief intervened on a particular point. His Junior Minister is replying. If any point is left out, after he has finished with his reply, you can ask your add,tional supplementary and you can impress upon him the point you raised. He intervened on a particular point and said whatever he wanted to say . .. *(Interruptions)* . ..

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : My humble submission is that the hon. Minister said that as per present norms, he is not in a- position to pay more compensation. But when the whole House agrees that these are ancient norms, outdated norms, I feel they she be changed, Who has prohibited our hon. Minister ? He can declare here, T will change the norms and 1 will pay the compensation.' Norms have to be changed for the Welfare of people. You declare this in the House and the country will be on your side. Have a human approach towards the children who have lost their lives, litis is my humble request.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Ex-gratia payment is a human act. So falas compensation is concerned, unless the position is made clear by the competent authority who are inquiring into it, that it is the responsibility of the railways, I cannot commit myself . .. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED S1B-1EY RAZI) : The Minister has said whatever he has to say. Mr. Lenka, do you have any more points to reply?

SHRI K.C. LENKA : Sir, Mr. Vishvjit P. Singh had raised a few points. He asked why the train was not stopped. For the information of the House, I would like to tell you that both the train and the bus were passing in the same direction. How can a train stop and give way to the bus. The train does not have an immediate brake system. So technically it is not possible for the train to stop and allow the bus to pass. A second point was raised regarding modern technology and how it can be used to man these level crossings to avoid accidents. That point will be considered ... *(Interruptions)* ... Two other points were raised regarding humps and sp|eed breakers and signals. There are humps and there are signals also. We will consider the suggestion of the hon. Member who said that the signboards should be written in the local language. Signal is there in the level crossings. Sir, many hon. Members have suggested that the signs-boards should be written in the local languages. We will consider this point.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF . There is a board in red dolour warning the vehicles not to cross.

SHRI K.C. LENKA : Mr. Bhandare wanted an assurance that all unmanned level crossings will be manned. To that point the Minister of Railways has already answered. We will review the present norms ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: No, he said that unless he gets the money, he will not do it. That is the answer. That is the pity of it

SHRI K.C. LENKA : The Minister of Railways has already agreed that the review of certain norms declaring unmanned level crossings as manned level crossings will be done, that the present norms will be reviewed. We will consider this aspect also. Another point that the hon. Member has asked is about enquiry of the case. The Railways Commission, the South -Central Circle, will be conducting the enquiry in this case and after the enquiry is done, the responsibility will be fixed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Now, we shail switch over to the next statement . . - *(Interruptions')*

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : I would like to record my protest. I am totally dissatisfied with the attitude of the Railway Ministry. 1 feel that it is most callous and inhuman that no ex-gratia payment is to be made to the bereaved families. I feel that it is also inhuman to take an attitude of pre-judging things before the Enquiry Commission submits its report. I want this to be recorded . . . *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : It is over now . . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : Sir, I am not . .. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV ; I also want to record my pro test . . . *(Interruptions)* ,

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Please take you seat ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : They are referring to norms without having- human consideration . . . *(Interruptions)*

डा० बापू कालवाते : कम से कम सारे सदन की भावनाओं का आदर करें (व्यवधान)

SHRI DAVID LEDGER : He has not responded to my point . . . *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIB-TEY RAZI): Please take your seat... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI DAVID LEDGER : Two teachers one peon and one clerk also died. Will the Government consider giving jobs to one member of each of their families ?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Major issues are involved . . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, after all, the Ministry is responsible to Parliament. I do not know why the Minister is pressing on the old sorm when the entire Parliament wants that the norm should be changed' in this case. The Government should agree to give some compensation. Which is the bigger institution than Parliament ? *(Interruptions)*

डा० बापू कालवाते : यह स्वयं कहते हैं कि यह सदन सर्वश्रेष्ठ है तो फिर सदन की भावनाओं की कद्र क्यों नहीं करते हैं ? **(व्यवधान)**

The House is supreme as you have said. Why doesn't he listen to us and accept it ?

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA (Kamataka) : Let us not create confusion: If the norms a;e outdated and the whole Parliament wants that they should be changed, I do not know why the Minister is raising objection to it ? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : They do not realise the grief . .. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA : All the Departments are subject to the control of Parliament. When the Parliament wants,

why should not the Ministry reconsider and change it? *{Interruptions)*

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : When the whole Parliament is interested in it, I request the Minister to announce compensation to the victims in this accident as a special case.

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : The Minister is here ... *(Interuptions)* ... Mr. Yadav, you please take your seat ... *{Interruptions).* There is one point of order.

श्री राम नरेश यादव : माननीय मंत्री जी से अनुरोध है कि सदन की जो भावना है उसको ध्यान में रखते हुए उसका सम्मान करें और जो (व्यवधान) मरे हैं बच्चे . . . . . (व्यवधान)

SHRI M. A. BABY (Kerala): Sir, in spite of the overall sentiment of the House cutting across and transcending political differences, the senior Minister keeps quiet. When he keeps quiet, I understand that there must be some serious issues relating to norms. Therefore, what I would suggest is if the Minister is not in a position to make any categorical assurance that some kind of compensation would be paid, taking into account the sentiments expressed in the House, the Minister can at least state that in view of the sentiments expressed in the House, in the whole House, he would do his best and, if necessary, come with certain amendments to the norms. Though we are generally opposed to issuing Ordinances, if the Minister issues an Ordinance in this regard, we will certainly extend our support.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : The matter is now closed. Mr. Vishvjit P. Singh, you have already spoken. You please sit down.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Unless the hon. Minister gives such an assurance, the House will not be satisfied. Let the Minister give an assurance that he will put the issue before the Cabinet for its consideration that in this particular case, in this extraordinary circumstance, he recommends that some compensation may be paid, some ex-gratia payment should be paid. *(Interruptions)*

श्रीमती सत्या बहिन : पार्टी लाईन से ऊपर एक सुझाव आया है . . . . . (व्यवधान)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI): Please take your seats. Mr. [1] Narayanasamy, Mrs. Satya Bahin, please take your seats ... *{Interruptions)* ... Mr. Vishvjit P. Singh, the Minister was here when hon. Members sought their clarifications. I think he has noted all your sentiments. Whatever he wanted to say, he has explained. He has also explainied his departmental position. You had registered your feelings. There is not much time. Therefore, we will switch over to another subject\Mr. Jakhar, you make your statement ... *(Inter-ruptions)* ... Distribute copies of his statement to hon. Members.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Sir, I am on a point of order.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : No point of order. Kindly distribute copies of the statement to hon. Members.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Sir . . *(Interruptions)* . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Mr. Sharief, do you want to say something ? Mr. Jakhar, you please wait for some time.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Sir, in deference to the wishes and strong feelings of the hon. Members, I will approach the Cabinet with a request to consider this as a separate, one-time case for any compensation to be paid.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for agreeing to my suggestion.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Kindly distribute copies of the statement.

कई माननीय सदस्य : 6 बज चुके हैं (व्यवधान)

श्री मोहम्मद अलीमुर रहमान : सवा 6 बजे गये हैं कब तक करेंगे आप ?

†[श्री खलीलुर्रहमान : सर आज हम बहुत गंभीर हैं, कब तक करेंगे आप]

डा० बापू कालदाते : कब तक चलेगा .....

(व्यवधान)

यह स्टेटमेंट कब तक चलेगा। बहुत समय लगेगा जाफर साहब।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZP) : Mr. Kaldate, please sit down.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Sir, I am on a point of order.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Mr. Jadhav, please sit down. Let me infrom the Members about some business. Actually, I have noticed that the Members are not in a mood to continue further. But I request Mr. Jakhar to make the statement today and the clarifications part can be completed later on.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: What about the statement by Mr. Sukh Ram ? That is also very important ... *(.Interruptions)* . . .

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : I am on a point of order ... *(Interruptions)* . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : What is your point of order ?

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : This is a very important problem . . . *(Interruptions)* ... It is my region's problem. My point of order is that this is a very big tragedy of this century. The Minister is merely making a statement. I want this to be converted into a Short-Duration Discussion.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : If you are not satisfied with the statement, then you can ask for this.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : It is a very important matter. People do not know the intensity of the earthquake in Latur. That is my neighbouring district. So many people lost their lives ... *(Interruptions)* . . . Sir, many people lost their lives . . . *(Interruptions)*

. Clarifications can be taken up tomorrow.

श्री मोहम्मद खलीलुर रहमान : क्लैरिफिकेशंस कब होंगे ? कल के लिए रखे जाएं। (व्यवधान)

[†श्री मोहम्मद खलीलुर्रहमान : क्लेरीफिकेशन कब होंगे - कल के लिए रखे जाएं ... मुदाखलत ...]

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Sir, this is very important.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : O. K. It Wfll be tomorrow. Mr. Jakhar, kindly read out the statement.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Earthquake in Maharashtra and Adjoining Areas

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I seek leave of the House to make a statement on the situation arising out of recent earthquake in Maharashtra and adjoining areas and the relief and rehabilitation measures taken by the Government.

An earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter Scale struck the Marathwada region of the country just before day-break at 3.56 A. M. of September 30, 1993. It had its epicentre at Killari village in Ausa Tehsil of latur district in Maharashtra. It was followed by three after—shocks of declining intensity on the same day, Milder after-shocks still continue to be felt in the region.

† [ ] Transliteration in Arabic Sript.